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STORIES



"Watch Out!"

By Reggie Coghlan

::

Week End

By Ralph Gordon

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PEP

New, Snappy, Spicy Stories



January, 1933

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PepPy Pals



Dear Editor:

Have just purchased your new issues of *Pep*, and *Gay Parisienne*, believe me, we are well satisfied. Please give us more of girls in the nude, and the young ones.

Yours for longer and hotter stories.

Please have Miss Page, write more often, I am,

Very truly yours,

E. LaM.

Dear Editor of *Pep*:

I have been a reader of *Pep* stories since July and I sure do enjoy the stories—they are great. Also the pictures—they are wonderful. I especially admire the one on page 21 of October. I think there is nothing quite as lovely and handsome as the beautiful nude form of a fully developed girl. It is something to be proud of. I would like to second the plea of J.E.W. in the *PepPy Pals* of October issue about nude pictures of men and nude men in the stories.

I believe the feminine readers would like the stories and pictures and get more of a kick and thrill out of them. How about it girls? Don't you agree with me?

Good luck to *Pep* stories and *PepPy Pals'* page.

C.L.F., Mt. Vernon, Maine

Dear Sir:

I heard much talk about your magazine *Pep*, but could never get hold of one until today and Mr.—it has everything I was told it had.

The one I am reading now is June number and don't believe I ever read any stories that can hold a candle with them. The ones I like best are, "After the Show," "Manufactured Love," and "Veni Vici Whoopie." The pictures are great.

H. H., Pittsburgh, Pa.

1807 Howard St.

N. S., Pittsburgh, Pa.

Dear Editor:

I have been a reader of "*Pep*" ever since I ran across a copy in Hollywood five years ago. It has certainly given me plenty of pleasure and I'm calling on it for one more service if it's permissible. I arrived here a short while ago and haven't been successful in finding friends so I am appealing to the girl-readers of "*Pep*," especially those here in Schenectady, though all will be welcomed and answered.

I can see a steady improvement in "*Pep*" down through the years and can't see how it could be improved just now. So I'll close with best wishes for your continued success and a hope that some girl or girls in Schenectady or anywhere else will write.

Yours truly,

John H. Shay,

966 Albany Street

Schenectady, N. Y.

Dear Editor:

I'm a regular reader of *Pep* stories and I believe it's the best magazine of its kind on the market. It seems that every issue of *Pep* stories is bigger and better. Keep it up. I should like to hear from other readers of *Pep* stories both male and female. The latter preferred. I'm 18 years old, weigh about 140 lbs., 5 feet, 9 inches tall. I promise to answer all letters.

J. T. R.

1466 E. Van Buren

Phoenix, Ariz.

Dear Editor:

I've been reading your story book often and find it very entertaining.

My protest is—don't leave so much to memory as "they Kiss"! Tell us the details.

Also leave off the drapes in those darling model poses. Drapes only detract from their wonderful beauties!

Your story "Secrets" in Oct. issue was great! But don't stop at kissing! Be human!

Faithfully,

T. B., Oak Park, Ill.

Kay Carroll

A VIVID IMAGINATION, plus the knack of being able to transmit her thoughts in interesting style via the keyboard of her portable typewriter . . . that's the reason why this charming young author has such a loyal reader audience.

We must tell you that her hair is a beautiful shade of auburn, and her pale blue eyes are large and soulfully wistful.

Taller than the average, her figure is willowy slim and she likes tailored suits that mold her to perfection.

The age of our Kay is a secret, but we suspect that she has not yet passed the third decade.

Motoring is her favorite outdoor sport, and she owns a speedy roadster that she drives like an expert.

Yes, gentlemen, she is married, and there is every indication that Kay and her adoring hubby love each other to distraction.

She is a product of New York, born and reared in the once-peaceful atmosphere of Washington Square! But now she has a



KAY CARROLL

little house in a Westchester suburb, with a garden and a cellar 'nearly everything!

Dear Editor:

I am a Big Booster of your "Peppy" and "Spicy" Magazines.

They sure are great stuff and no kidding on my part. Those authors of your stories, sure know their stuff.

I wish you'd print this letter and I'd like to hear from E.G.B., of Texas, and any other boy who wants to write.

Sincerely Yours,

Sally Mays,

Gen. Del., East Gary, Ind.

Dear Sir:

Your magazine *Pep* is very good. I enjoy it and look forward to it each month.

I agree with some of your readers. I have not dared to write you before but I will now. I enjoy the stories but they would be still better if you gave the man a better break in them.

Yours for a better *Pep*,
L. B. H., Marietta, Ohio.

Dear Editor:

I have just read my first copy of *Pep* stories. They are fine. I shall look forward to each issue.

I agree with several readers that the man should have a better break. It would add to the interest of the stories if his body were described and pictured as is the women's. This would appeal particularly to your women readers. Your portraits are good only not quite revealing enough.

Yours for a better magazine.

Respectfully,

J. A. H.

Parkersburg, W. Va.

Dear Editor:

I am sure glad your company took over *Pep* and *Spicy* stories, the stories in them are a lot better now. Only why do the principals always have to get married at (Please turn to Page 58)

Week - End

By

Ralph Gordon

THE TELEPHONE jingled peremptorily on the desk of Irene Holmes late one afternoon as she was cleaning up the odds and ends of a busy day.

"Hello!" she said wearily.

"Listen, Irene!" an excited voice exclaimed. "What do you think?"



"Oh, it's you, Betty!" she replied. "I'm too tired to think."

"Cheer up!" said Betty. "I've got news for you that'll take away that tired feeling."

"But why so excited? . . . Calm yourself, girlie. . . You'll have heart failure if you get yourself so het up! . . . Now, tell me, what's the idea?"

Betty Osborne laughed. "I've got two tickets for a week-end cruise on a transatlantic liner!"

"Honest?"

"You bet I have! . . . Sailing tomorrow afternoon. . . And you're going with me, old dear. . . Won't we have a swell time?" The words shot over the telephone wire, pell-mell, breathlessly.

"Where in the world did you get the tickets?" asked Irene.

"Oh, that husband of mine had it all planned that we were going together!" Betty answered. "He had everything fixed, but this afternoon he got a telegram summoning him to Chicago on important business, and that let him out."

"But couldn't he cancel the reservations?"

"Sure he could!" Betty said. "But do you think I'm going to stay home alone for the week-end if I can help it?"

"I don't blame you!"

"Not a chance! I'm going bye-bye with the girl-friend!"

"You're a darling to think of me!" Irene gushed. "Did Tom leave for Chicago yet?"

"Yes! On the Twentieth Century Limited today." Betty replied, and then she added suddenly: "Why don't you come

Irene was tall and slender, but in certain spots her charm bloomed enchantingly . . .

over and spend the night with me, then we can go to the boat together tomorrow? . . . Can you get away from business all day?"

"I guess so!" Irene said. "Tomorrow is Saturday. . . That's a good idea. . . I need the rest. . . And I haven't slept with you until the middle of the morning since you were married six months ago!"

Betty laughed softly. "That's a fact, and I'm beginning to miss you."

"Really?"

"You don't know the half of it, sweetheart!" Betty sighed. "See you tonight?"

"I'll be there!" said Irene. "It'll seem like old times!"

BETTY AND Irene were the closest of friends ever since their schooldays. They had watched each other grow up in more ways than one.

Then Betty fell desperately in love with Tom Osborne, married him on an elopement, and went to live in a Long Island suburb.

Irene, busy with her job in the New York office of an importing firm, had seen very little of Betty after the latter's marriage, and Betty was too much engrossed with the ceaseless round of social engagements in her Long Island set to continue her hitherto close association with Irene.

In addition, masculine kisses and caresses, and muscular arms holding her in ecstasy, fully occupied her during the prolonged honeymoon.

But it was one of those sudden infatuations that blaze up quickly, and die down just as speedily, and the temperature of her love affair had reached the lukewarm stage within a few months after the marriage vows had united Betty and Tom. It was now decidedly tepid, and there was every indication that it would be cool at the end of the first year.

When Tom announced that he had arranged for a week-end cruise on board a palatial liner, Betty was pleased! . . . Possibly it would revive the torrid lovemak-

ing of their honeymoon days and nights, and, if so, the trip would be worth while!

She had heard of those cruises. Some of her young married friends had taken them, and they had told her some of the thrilling details.

"Trips to nowhere!" That's what they were called. . . Simply two or three days out on the billowy Atlantic Ocean in a floating palace, with plenty of entertainment, lots of opportunity for flirtation if one felt so inclined, and congenial partners!

"It'll be grand!" she told Tom, kissing him lusciously.

"Think you'll like it?" he said.

"Will I? You bet!" she replied with enthusiasm. "Won't it seem like another honeymoon?"

"Sure it will!" He put his arm around her and fondled a swelling breast that reared its beautiful contours underneath her filmy negligee. They were in their bedroom, dressing for dinner at a friend's house.

"Do that again!" she breathed. "And a real kiss, too!"

Two minutes slipped by while their lips drank in the moisture of each other's sweetness, and Tom's fingers toyed tantalizingly with the fullness of Betty's buxom bosom.

At last they breathed again.

"Oh, Tom, darling!" Betty sighed. "That was wonderful! Do you know you haven't kissed me or fondled me like that for several weeks?"

"Betty!" he protested.

"Oh, I know, you've kissed and we've gone through the motions!" she admitted. "But a certain something was missing. . . the old spark wasn't there . . . if you know what I mean!"

Tom laughed. "Was the spark present that time?"

"I'll say it was. . . Oh, heavenly!"

He sat on a nearby couch and pulled her down on his lap. . . The negligee

slipped off her shoulders very easily, and he buried his face in the soft, fragrant valley between her crimson-tipped breasts.

"Oh-h-h-h-h!" Betty shivered as he kissed each hardening tip with lingering tenderness. Her arm crept around his neck.

"Tom . . . I hate to interrupt . . . but we'll be late for our dinner engagement!" The words came hesitatingly through her warmly parted lips, and her blue eyes were half-closed . . . A wealth of blond curls were fluffed about her pretty face.

"What does it matter?" he murmured, widening the area of his kisses in a mad-dening arc. . . Betty didn't even reply!

His lips ascended the smooth column of her neck and came to rest once more on her gasping mouth. . . All engagements, all appointments, the world itself were blotted out in the fiery mist that seemed to envelope them as their arms intertwined in blissful forgetfulness!

Next day, Tom telephoned.

"That week-end trip is all off, Betty, so far as I'm concerned."

"What happened?" asked Betty, disappointedly.

Then he told her of the summons to Chicago.

"Oh, I'm awfully sorry!" she murmured.

"So am I, dearest, but it can't be helped."

"I thought we were going to have another wonderful honeymoon, particularly after that glorious session before dinner last night."

"So did I."

"But I suppose we can go some other time," Betty added.

Then Tom had an idea. "Say, why don't you telephone Irene and get her to go with you?"

Betty smiled. "That's a good hunch, Tom. . . You wouldn't mind, would you?"

"Certainly not!" he replied. "If you promise me that you won't flirt with the naughty men on board. . . It's a devilishly tempting trip, you know!"

"I always behave myself!" said Betty nonchalantly.

"All right!" laughed Tom. "Call Irene!"

So Betty telephoned!

IT WAS AN excited pair of feminine beauties that climbed the gangplank of the liner the following afternoon, after a night and most of the morning spent in reminiscent chit-chat of other days.

In their stateroom, Betty dismissed the steward who had carried the bags, then she pulled a tight turban off her blonde curls.

"Here we are, Irene, old girl!"

"All set for a wild week-end!" Irene replied, smiling broadly.

"But I promised Tom I wouldn't flirt!" said Betty. "Don't lead me into temptation! . . . You lovely brunettes are *so* enticing."

Irene was a luscious specimen of the dark-haired, tan-skinned type of girl. . . She wore her hair drawn back tightly from her smooth forehead and coiled in a vampish, waving knot on the nape of her neck. . . Cute tendrils coiled there in curly prettiness.

Her features were delicately modeled, but her mouth was full-lipped and sensuously crimson. . . Large dark eyes seemed to look through you whenever she turned their glowing beauty in one's direction, and their long, curving lashes had a habit of drooping disturbingly.

Irene was tall and slender, but in certain spots her charms bloomed enchantingly. . .

The line from her narrow waist swooped outward over her soft hips in a way that was very intriguing, and her brassiere was not able to hide the fact that it cupped in its satin smoothness a very delightful bosom!

Betty's charms were as full-blown as they were blonde, and she was an armful of tender, silky flesh!

The vivid contrast between these two lovely week-enders was most striking

while they were freshening themselves in preparation for dinner. And a warning should have been issued to every man on board that their hearts should be prepared for a series of thumping thrills when they cast their eyes upon Betty and Irene!

"SHALL WE have a cocktail?" asked Betty, when they were seated at the table in the dining saloon.

"What a foolish question!" retorted Irene. "We shall have dozens of cocktails! . . . I haven't felt so kittenish in so

long a time that I'm afraid of myself."

"I'm the one who should be afraid!" Betty murmured. "Look around you at all these frolicking men! . . . Good lookers, too! . . . I can feel myself falling already if any one of them approached me with an invitation to dance or something!"

"What would you call 'something'?" Irene asked amusedly.

"I'll leave that to your colorful imagination, dearie!"

At that moment a cocktail was set in front of them.

*"Could I have
one kiss, any-
way?" he pleaded*



"Here goes!" said Betty. "I'm on my way!"

"Right with you!" said Irene.

Betty took several sips and put down her glass. "Isn't it almost too delicious to drink?"

"M-m-m-m-m-m!" Irene moaned, smacking her crimson lips. . . And in that operation the tip of a soft and very lively tongue could be seen darting hither and thither about her mouth.

They had wine with their dinner, and a *liqueur* afterward, so that they were more than usually exhilarated when they arose from the table and strolled into the lounge for their coffee and cigarettes.

The orchestra was playing a snappy fox-trot.

"I suppose it's not the thing for two girls to dance together!" said Betty.

"There isn't any law against it, but it's too bold an invitation for a pick-up. . . I prefer to select my company, don't you?"

"I'll say so!" agreed Betty. "I hate to have a man barge down on me like that! . . . He's usually not the type!"

"I don't think you'll have to put up with that!" murmured Irene. "Glance over there! . . . Aren't they a couple of heartbreakers?"

At a short distance away, a curly-headed blonde young man sat in conversation with a brown-haired youth. . . As Betty turned her face to look in response to Irene's suggestion, a pair of brown eyes caught her blue orbs and held them for a fleeting instant.

"Not bad!" said Betty. "If I wanted to flirt."

"Oh, that's not flirtation on board a ship!" Irene retorted. "We should be sociable. . . It's the accepted custom."

"How nice!" whispered Betty.

"I'm going to dance with the blond," said Irene.

"He hasn't asked you to dance!"

"But he will!"

"Aren't you confident of your power over men?"

"It's a gift, girlie! . . . See, here he comes now!"

Directly in back of the light-haired young man, the brown-haired one trailed him!

Smiles! . . . Bows! . . . Introductions! . . . And in a few minutes the dance-floor had two additional couples gliding gracefully over its polished surface.

"I'm in luck!" said Ted Green, clasping Irene's waist.

"I did want to dance!" she whispered.

"And you're a wonderful dancer!"

"Thanks!" she said, letting herself snuggle into the curve of his embrace. . . . She liked it! . . . Maybe it was the excellent dinner and the delicious cocktails and wines and *liqueurs*, but she felt her heart in a throbbing attunement with the music!

"You're the most gorgeous blonde on board!" said Jack Timmons, with his arm encircling the yielding contours of Betty's waist.

"So soon?" she giggled. "You haven't seen everybody yet!"

"Yes, I have!" he laughed. "Jack and I came on board early, and we watched all the passengers arrive."

"Did you see us?"

"*Did we?*" he whispered. "We were in the dining saloon while you were having dinner, too, and I simply couldn't concentrate on my food."

Betty giggled again. "I didn't know I was going to meet such a brazen flatterer!"

"I mean it!" And the way he said it convinced Betty that she had unwittingly made another conquest.

As the evening progressed, there were a bewildering variety of glasses full of liquids that tickled the palate, and an endless number of dances.

Toward midnight, the quartet was going high, wide and *very* merry.

"Let's take a walk on deck!" Irene suggested.

"The moonlight is marvelous!" Betty murmured, romantically.

Out on the deck, they swung along the promenade with their arms linked, talking and laughing gaily.

"I'm a bit chilly in this night air!" Irene remarked. "I think I'll run down and get a wrap."

"I feel warm!" said Betty.

Ted took Irene's elbow and guided her toward the companionway.

"I think I'll replenish my cigarette supply!" he said.

"Where's your stateroom?" she asked.

He had the key in his pocket. . . . Glancing at the number, Irene read it.

"Why, it's opposite ours!" she said.

"That's fine!" exclaimed Ted. "Now we can go down together."

Irene disappeared into her room, and Ted vanished into his. But he reappeared almost immediately, and, crossing the passageway, knocked on the opposite door.

"Come in!" came a voice that made his heart flutter.

"Oh, are you ready so soon?" asked Irene, rummaging in the closet for a suitable wrap.

Her evening gown dipped in a vent that reached to the sharply curving indentation in her back, and Ted's eyes couldn't stray from the display of smooth, tanned skin. . . . And as she turned to face him the decolletage in front proved even more attractive!

"Don't go up yet!" he whispered. "Let's stay here and smoke a cigarette and talk. . . . It's so cozy!"

"But it's very intimate!" teased Irene. "Alone with a gentleman in my stateroom . . . and after midnight, too! Shocking, isn't it?"

"Just like electricity!" Ted laughed. "We mustn't stay too long!" she warned.

"How long is too long?" he grinned.



Suddenly she had an uncontrollable desire to kiss this young man.

"Long enough to be noticed!" she shot back.

"Who'll notice that we're missing?"

"Betty, of course! And your handsome friend."

"Oh, they'll be so occupied with their own affairs that they'll never remember we're even on board."

Irene took a deep puff of her cigarette . . . Suddenly she had an uncontrollable desire to kiss this blond young man . . . kiss him with all the fervor of her amorous soul!

She swayed toward him, and through a fragrant mist that seemed to envelope her, Ted opened his arms!

"I WONDER where Irene escaped to?" murmured Betty, sitting with Jack in the shadow of a lifeboat on the upper deck. The moonbeams were shimmering in all their beauty on the far-reaching water, forming a path of silvery romance.

"Why bother?" Jack whispered. "We're here!"

"Isn't it a wonderful night?"

"It wouldn't be half so beautiful if you weren't on board!"

Betty laughed. "Still feel that way, after having spent a whole evening with me?"

"I'll always feel that way!" he breathed.

"You never left me for a moment."

"I hope I never have to leave you."

"Oh, but you must!"

"Why?"

"Because I have a perfectly good husband waiting for me in New York when I get back."

Jack's face clouded. "Oh!" he said simply.

She laid a timid hand on his arm. "Are you disappointed?"

"I'm speechless!" he muttered.

Betty laughed and plucked at his sleeve. "Forget it!" she said. "Give me a cigarette and don't be so serious."

Even in the shadowy nook in which they were sitting, Betty's blonde loveliness

shone like the silver moonbeams out there on the water, and an occasional shaft of eerie light played among the golden curls in a way that made her seem angelic!

As she leaned forward to catch the flame of the match which he held for her cigarette, Jack couldn't fail to see the voluptuous swelling of her glorious breasts beneath her low cut gown, and a subtle perfume made him breathe deeply.

"Could I have one kiss, anyway?" he pleaded.

"Will you be satisfied with one?" she teased.

"I wouldn't be satisfied with a billion!" he said. "But I thought it would be better to ask for one."

"And leave the rest to me?" she queried coquettishly.

When he bent his face, she did not avoid his lips. . . And Betty felt the sort of spark that she had mentioned several evenings before in her own boudoir! . . . It was the sort of thrill that made one tremble!

She didn't remove her lips as the pressure of Jack's mouth increased, and then she slowly let his kiss sink inward, moistly, hotly, headily!

The touch of his fingers on her breast caused another spark to shoot through her, and, as she closed her eyes, her mouth opened widely and seemed to draw his very soul between her lips.

Minutes later, she gasped: "Ah-h-h-h!"

"You're too good to be true!" Jack said, huskily.

"That was a *kiss*!" she said tremulously.

"One in a billion!" he replied.

His arm was round her bare shoulders, and his fingers were stroking the silky flesh in a way that caused a series of sparks to shoot up and down and all around Betty's consciousness.

Then his hand crept inside the opening of her gown, just where her brassiere was

(Please turn to Page 57)

Hollywood Parade

By

Charles B. McCray

and

Frank Kenneth Young

HONEY' WILSON had tired of trying to crash the gates of Hollywood studios, and was working as a waitress in a small tea room just off Sunset Boulevard. Her parents had named her "Honey" probably because they knew it meant sweetness; but Honey was begin-

ning to realize that Hollywood can be both sweet and—bitter!

She was a pleasure-loving creature, as many another girl in the glittering maelstrom of moviedom, and her skimpy salary of sixteen dollars per was scarcely sufficient to meet her demands. Her rent was due, and she needed clothes. Yes, needed them despite the fact that hers was a body the gods might have worshipped. . . .

Off duty for an afternoon, she was walking up the street toward the boulevard, when she literally bumped into success! Or it bumped into her, the precise order depending upon the point of view.

For at a brisk gait from the opposite direction came Melvin Blayne, hard-working director from the G-K lot. Honey's mind was occupied with thoughts of her



*Hers was a body the Gods
might have worshipped.*

personal problems, and she was paying scant attention to other pedestrians. There was an unavoidable collision.

Honey tripped backward and sat down heavily. But though the sidewalk broke her fall, it did not entirely slow her momentum. Her dainty feet rose heavenward, even after her soft-cushioned seat had made a jarring contact. Her flimsy dress ruffled high upon rounding thighs, displaying the loveliest legs ever shown in Hollywood or anywhere else.

Mr. Blayne assumed all the blame, of course—and small wonder! From his vantage point, gazing down upon a thrilling spectacle of sheer nude hose, fancy ribbon garters, cream-white flesh and lace-trimmed undies, he had been amply recompensed had he confessed to willful murder! For a paralyzed moment, he could do nothing but stare, but consciousness finally returned.

Honey flashed her very best smile, as the man helped her to her feet, and this, it seemed was sufficient. No other apology was needed. Although still the hard-working director, Blayne was captivated by that smile, even as he had been thrilled by those legs! If this were a "dat, dose and dem" story, we might add that director Blayne was also charmed by something else! However. . . .

The legs and the smile were sufficient. They could be capitalized and used to attract box-office receipts!

Delivering his very best bow, director Blayne leaned close to Honey, and murmured: "Have you ever thought of entering motion pictures, my dear? . . ."

Thus was Honey Wilson introduced to success. Her rise to fame, after that accidental meeting, was little short of phenomenal.

Her first audition on try-out stage number eight proved that Mel's snap judgment never failed. Given a song to sing and a dance to do, her performance stirred one to thoughts of jeweled skies, moonlight,

roses and love! Her gestures, as she sang, were neither bashful nor bold, and her voice was as sweet as her name.

She did no high-kicking. She neither quivered nor shook. But the way she swayed her wonderful body, in perfect time and rhythm, made one think—as we have said—of jeweled skies, moonlight, roses and love!

The paunchy producers, sitting in the background during the first test, clasped their paunchy stomachs, and beamed upon Melvin Blayne, from whose efforts they derived their millions.

"A good name—Honey Wilson!" they murmured. "You don't have to change a name like that. People will remember it, and it sounds good. Guess we gotta admit you use good judgment, Mel. Guess whatever you do is okay!"

Melvin was searching for a feminine lead for "Leave It To Love," a forthcoming production. Honey seemed to fill the bill. And so, by unanimous assent, the producers agreed to give her a break. . . .

THE FIRST FEW scenes were shot at a location of Mel's choosing, down near Balboa Bay. Players and equipment were transported over a distance of fifty miles from the studio, which, in these days of enforced economy, was no trifling matter of expense.

But Melvin wanted for Honey an atmosphere that would bring out her best qualities—something that ordinary sets could never supply. It was just a matter of business, of course. . . .

"Leave It To Love" opened with Bernie Collins, leading man, parked in a cream-colored roadster against a magnificent background of moonlit bower. Out upon the bay, a carefully concealed moon "spot" revealed the tableau of a beautiful girl—Honey Wilson, in fact—maneuvering a shell-like canoe across the black and silver surface.

This was Honey's first appearance for any picture, and she had been instructed

to provide plenty of sex interest, which is always a good box office attraction. Therefore, she was nude except for a skimpy, little garment that hardly deserved the name of bathing suit. A special lighting effect helped to reveal the lovely lines and contours of her slender, nymph-like body.

The tempo of the low, dulcet music being played by an orchestra seemed to weave a spell about her. She rose in the canoe and began to sway her hips in time to the music, with arms uplifted as if in moon-worship. And as she swayed, she sang a song, slightly sad and wistful, all

about the moon and love!

When the scene had been shot, Bernie saw with amusement that the canoe was drifting in closer to shore. From Honey's little wail of dismay, he knew that she disliked the idea of stepping out in the glare of lights wearing no more than her scant attire. Diving into the seat of his car, he brought forth a robe with which he hastened to the rescue.

"I beg your pardon," he said, "I thought you might want this."

"Thank you," she murmured, accepting the robe and wrapping herself in it. "Then



"Don't you love me any more?" she asked in strained tones.

you were watching me?"

"I couldn't help realizing your predicament."

"But I don't like you for looking!"—with the petulant pout of an ingenue.

"So I fancied," agreed Bernie. "But won't you let me take you back in my car? They're ready for the next scene now."

Gratefully, she allowed him to assist her to a seat in the roadster.

"I suppose you hardly knew what to make of my crazy antics in the canoe," she said.

"On the contrary," replied Bernie. "You were expressing a longing for freedom, for communion with nature. This desire for soul expression is a natural trait in every one of us. You desired the—"

"Be careful where you're driving!" screamed Honey, as the car veered from the road. "You'll have us both in the ditch!"

After a time, both lighted cigarettes.

"There's something about a smoke, isn't there?" Honey murmured dreamily.

"Kipling to the contrary, there is much more about a girl!" laughed Bernie. And with that, he stopped the car and put his arms around her.

Honey decided that he was a very nice-looking, young man, and that she wanted to be kissed by him. And when he did kiss her, she was conscious of a delirious rapture. She felt as if she were being lifted bodily as well as spiritually.

Rather strange, considering that she had known him so short a time, yet quite reasonable, for Honey was not so inexperienced in love-making as in acting!

During the rest of the picture, Honey's behavior was simply the development of a malady. She did, of course, what director Blayney told her to do, but without cognizance, except of Bernie! . . .

In spite of all, Blayney must have thought her work good, or he wouldn't have pleaded with those paunchy producers.

"Remember," he said to them, "other producers will be wanting her after they see her work in this picture! They'll be offering her contracts. We got her dirt cheap, but if we don't treat her right, we're going to lose her! I suggest a percentage bonus on the receipts. That'll show that we're willing to do the right thing."

"But we're tying up our money, Mel, and she didn't put in a cent!" they argued.

"Yes, and we've got to tie up our star if we want to make more money in the future. It's the only way, gentlemen."

"Well, we don't stand to pay her a bonus if the picture don't go across, and we part with only a small split if it's a wow. Not bad, Mel, not bad!"

A few days later, Melvin called Honey into his private office, and explained the details of his plan.

"But, why, Mr. Blayney?" she asked, when he had finished speaking. "Why have you done this for me?"

"A mere matter of business, Miss Wilson," he replied, hiding a passionate gleam in his eyes. "I want to see the company prosper, and I realize the necessity of your being satisfied, too. To this end, I suggest that you also buy a home in Beverly Hills."

Honey laughed. "What would I want with one, and how could I afford it?" Then, sober reflection replacing her smile, she added: "Pardon my laughing, Mr. Blayney. But really, I'm so surprised."

"I am ready to advance the money from personal funds against your bonus," he explained. Then, noticing the expression on Honey's face: "Please don't misunderstand my motives, Miss Wilson. While the funds are personal, they are offered strictly for business reasons. The other stars all have nice homes. I'm merely suggesting a way for you to have one, too."

So, because Honey was in the habit of obeying her hard-working director, she purchased a two-story stucco out in Beverly Hills, and Melvin aided her in making the selection.

But when Bernie drove out in his cream-colored roadster, and motored her through beautiful San Fernando Valley, she forgot all about home, career, director and everything. Bernie asked her to marry him, and she was in love with Bernie! Her acceptance of his proposal was a foregone conclusion.

That very day, they went down to City Hall and gave notice of their intention to wed, as is required by California law. . . .

If director Blayney was dismayed by the sudden turn of affairs, he masked his emotions well.

"It is nice for you, in a way," he said slowly. "Being married will give you a certain sense of safety and security, and will also discourage the cheap gossip that is sometimes whispered unjustly about a girl. But on the other hand, some fans like to think of their favorite stars as being single!"



"Do you remember when we first met, and how?" she asked.

Honey felt vaguely disappointed over his congratulations, but was so busy with preparations for the coming wedding that she soon forgot her disappointment. She behaved as thoughtlessly as most girls do when afflicted by the Love Malady. She even laughed as she hummed the words of a song:

"I'm through with love! I'll never love again! . . ."

It all seemed so simple—so easy. . . . She had never loved anyone as she did Bernie. . . . She would never love again! . . .

The wedding ceremony was followed by a glamorous trip to Honolulu, after which there were days and nights of love and love-making, blissful hours spent all alone with Bernie. There were evenings, too, spent in watching supple-hipped sirens of the islands swing and sway through the intricacies of the native Hula.

Honey was sometimes a trifle incredulous. It seemed impossible that one woman could be so happy. And even more incredible was the fact that she and Bernie, appearing in pictures together, could be breaking all records at the box office.

No sooner had they returned to Hollywood than critics and fans alike swarmed forward to welcome them and herald their names. They resumed life where they had left it, and took up their abode in the Beverly Hills home.

But then, one morning, in hurt wonderment Honey discovered a new look in Bernie's eyes. It was an expression of green malice, a jealous envy such as she had never seen in his eyes before.

"What's the matter, darling?" she asked.

He rose, pushed back the breakfast dishes, and slammed down the paper he had been reading.

"Nothing," he said shortly. "Nothing at all."

With mounting wonder and pain, she watched him grow more inattentive each day. They ceased eating breakfast together. They rarely, if ever, went out together in the evening. And when she pressed him for reasons, he invariably evaded her questions or offered unlikely excuses.

One day, bewildered to the breaking point, she caught him running to keep a golf appointment. She confronted him with her heartbreak.

"Don't you love me any more?" she asked in strained tones.

"No," he replied roughly.

"But you married me—you certainly must have loved me!"

"Sorry, but I've discovered I didn't!" He moved as if to brush past her. "Get wise, Honey! You've become great; you're famous. You're stealing every picture we make. People are beginning to think of me not as Bernie Collins, a star in his own right, but as the husband of HONEY WILSON! Get it?"

"But, Bernie!" she begged.

"S'no use!" he interrupted roughly. "For people playing the movie game, to be married carries some assurance of respectability—that's all!"

"Then you—are loving—others?" she gasped.

"Sure!" he flung over his shoulder, and ran to join the golfers waiting before the house. . . .

Honey took her misery to her ornate, silken bedroom, and cried the color all out of a chiffoned bolster. Real salt tears they were, too, that seemed squeezed from her very heart. Yet when morning came, her nerves quieted, and the ache was less painful than the night before.

She felt almost refreshed as she stepped out into the California sunshine, and headed toward the private office of director Melvin Blayne.

Upon seeing her enter, the hard-working director put away the papers he had been going through, and turned to smile a cheery good morning. But at sight of her face, the welcoming smile slowly evaporated.

"What's the matter?" he asked quickly.

"It's Bernie," she explained in low tones.

Director Blayne frowned. "I was afraid so," he muttered. "He's been wanting to make a picture without you in the cast, and all sorts of things. Your husband seems to have grown a bit conceited, my dear."

"I used to think I loved him, but now—"

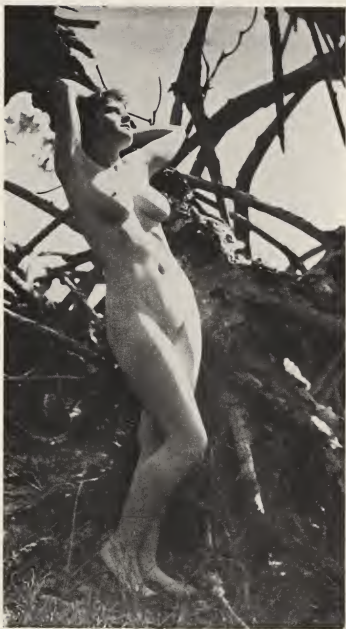
"Yes, yes, my dear!"

Honey pouted. "You needn't assume that paternal attitude when speaking to me," she said. "You're not much older than—"

"That's right," he interrupted. "But to get back to Bernie. This experience, however it ends, will make you an even greater star than you are now. You were a trifle immature in your first picture, 'Leave It To Love'."

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“One Hour!”

By

Jean Maxwell

THE WHIR OF the last motor car had grown faint down the driveway when Ann Hinsdale stepped off the porch and reentered her living room.

The Hinsdale bungalow, in a fashionable suburb of New York, had been the scene of an auction bridge game that evening, or, rather, the preceding evening, because it was now three o'clock in the morning!

It had been the usual “bridge” . . . eight couples, cards until eleven o'clock, a buffet supper, and then cocktails and highballs into the wee sma' hours.

Ann hummed a song as she started to put away the cocktail shaker and the glasses. The card tables had been stored long since to make room for dancing.

She was feeling fine! . . . A few highballs always stimulated Ann to the point of attempting to kick the chandelier or some such devilish stunt, and she had imbibed more than her accustomed number.

As she tripped out of the living room with a tray loaded with the aftermath of the hilarious night, a loud and sonorous snore smote her ears. It came from a large couch facing the fireplace.

The perpetrator of that snore was none other than her husband, Nat Hinsdale, who had thrown himself upon the couch at the moment the last guest had departed.

Ann snorted in disdain.

“Passed out again, I suppose!” she said.

Depositing the tray in the pantry, she returned to the living room and stood looking down upon the husky form draped so carelessly among the cushions.

The tapping of a petulant foot and the fretful frown on her pretty face indicated that Ann was thoroughly irritated at Nat's

behavior. The last thing in the world she wanted him to do just then was sleep! Ann had other plans for him of a far more interesting nature.

“Well!” she murmured.

Sitting on the edge of the couch, she bent down and kissed him.

There was no response from her drowsy spouse. Again Ann's sensuous mouth descended and clung tenaciously, moving around Nat's lips in a succulently moist kiss that should have aroused a graven image! . . . But another snore was his only reaction.

Lighting a cigarette, Ann put out all the lights save one little lamp in the corner, then she glanced at Nat once more.

“He may decide to wake up in a little while!” she said. “The big dumb-bell!”

Ann was what is popularly known as “hot and bothered”, and if Nat had not succumbed to the effect of his own powerful cocktails the next hour would have been a hectic period for the Hinsdales!

Into the bedroom went Ann, where she slid down the slender straps of her evening gown and let it slither to the floor in a shining cloud. A satin slip followed quickly. Then a tiny pair of “briefs” slipped downward over her lissom hips, accompanied by gossamer stockings and little slippers.

This operation left Ann in a stage of bewitching revelation, with the exception of a flimsy brassiere that tenderly supported two of the most lusciously strawberry-tipped breasts that were ever fondled and kissed anywhere at any time!

Ann had a figure . . . and didn't she prize it!

A flip of her fingers displaced the brassiere, and when it went into the discard she stood completely displayed in

all her wealth of flaxen hair and ivory white skin . . . beauty unadorned! A triple-winged full-length mirror reflected the entrancing picture from every angle.

Ann was made for love and kisses, and as she turned around slowly, inspecting her loveliness from all viewpoints, it was evident that her honeyed lips and rounded arms were ready to give as much as they got!

With a deep sigh, she ran her fingers up and down her smooth skin, over and over again, and her hands encompassed the circumference of each abundant breast until the strawberry tips became distended with amorous excitement.

Seizing an atomizer, she sprayed a perfumed mist over every inch of her enchanting curves, and, turning away from the mirror, she passed silently into the living room, a modern Aphrodite, seeking love!

Nat was still sleeping . . . Perching herself beside him, Ann loosened his collar and tie and tried to remove his coat, but the avoidupois of a former collegiate fullback proved too much for her to handle in his present inert state.

Nevertheless, she leaned over him and kissed his neck in the way that always drove him into transports of amative enthusiasm . . . long, lingering kisses with parted lips leaving a pinkish imprint wherever their fieriness touched.

Then she parted his lips with her fingers and sealed his mouth with hers in a furious, clinging kiss that was well calculated to bring a cold marble statue to life from the infusion of warmth that was now pulsating from the beautiful creature.

But Nat was motionless . . . Only his deep, regular breathing gave a sign that he was not really an effigy.

Again a deep sigh escaped Ann.

"He's dead to the world, I guess!" she murmured. "Well! . . . That's that!"

RESIGNED to the inevitable, Ann retraced her steps into the bedroom and, lighting another cigarette, reclined in palpitating loneliness, waiting for the amorous fever to cool before attempting to go to sleep.

No easier conquest ever awaited the advent of a venturesome lover!

Suddenly, she heard a car drive up to the bungalow door, and footsteps upon the porch.

"Who can that be?" she wondered.

A quick ring of the doorbell made her jump nervously, even though she was expecting it.

Slipping into a velvet negligee and satin mules, she hurried out and peered through the window in an effort to discover the identity of the caller at that unearthly hour.

Then she smiled, and without any further hesitation, she opened the door.

"Jim Hyatt!" she cried. "What's the matter?"

He laughed. "Sorry to disturb you, Ann! . . . I saw a light and knew that you were still up! . . . I told her it was a crazy thing to do, but Ethel insisted that I run back for her cigarette case, which she forgot after the party tonight."

Ann joined in his laughter. "Come in, Jim, and let's search for it." As he entered, she gently closed the door.

"She hasn't the slightest idea where she put it!" he said. "Where's Nat?"

"Come with me! I'll show you the horrible example." Ann smiled goodnaturedly, and Jim grinned as he saw Nat supine on the couch.

"I warned him that he was taking too many!" Jim remarked. "They were powerful, believe me!"

"And how do you feel?" asked Ann, mischievously.

"Never better!" he declared.

"Is Ethel feeling all right, too?"

"Very chipper, thanks, and full of crazy ideas, like hunting for a misplaced

cigarette case at this hour of the morning."

"Oh, don't scold the darling!" Ann said. "Why didn't she come with you?"

"She said she didn't feel like driving all the way back, but she would wait up for me! . . . Wives are like that, sometimes, you know."

"Are they?" Ann said coquettishly

"Some wives are!" Jim retorted, cast-

ing his eyes around for the cigarette case. It was nowhere in sight.

"Maybe it's in my bedroom!" Ann suggested.

"Will you look, please?" Jim asked.

"Oh, you can come in!" she said quickly. "If you're not a bashful young man."

The fragrance of her atomizer still lingered in the air of the bedroom, and Jim drew a deep breath of appreciation as he glanced at Ann with renewed interest. The dark blue of her negligee set off her blonde beauty to its perfection. It clung to her hips and outlined her breasts in most disconcerting style.



*Ann's mouth
became a living
flame.*

But Jim tore his eyes away and looked for the cigarette case, in vain!

"Maybe it's in the bathroom!" Ann offered the suggestion.

Sure enough it was!

"Thanks!" said Jim. "You can blame Ethel, not me, for your trouble."

"Don't be silly!" Ann laughed. "No trouble at all! . . . And I know something in a certain bottle that'll put you in a better mood before you go home."

"Thanks again!" said Jim. "I need a pick-up."

Ann mixed highballs for two. They were very long on Scotch and very short on mineral water.

"Now you can do me a favor!" she announced. "Help me get this heavy husband of mine to bed."

Jim looked at Nat's muscular frame. "Too much weight for me!" he resolved. "Let him sleep right there! He's comfortable."

"All right!" Ann agreed. "And now that's settled, let's have one more highball."

The second was followed by a third.

"Good-night!" said Jim.

"So very soon?" Ann protested. "You know, this is an unaccustomed thrill for me! . . . I'm not used to receiving visits from handsome young gentlemen so *very early* in the morning."

Jim sipped his glass, and let his glance travel over her. "And I'm not accustomed to drinking highballs with stunning blondes at *any* hour of the day or night!"

"Do you *really* think I'm stunning?"

They were sitting on a wide bench on the other side of the room from where Nat was sleeping . . . Ann's curving leg swung back and forth, and the negligee permitted a glimpse of a curving, dimpled leg and knee.

As Jim's eyes wandered over her, the neckline of the clinging garment drooped magically, and *more* than a glimpse of swelling white flesh was visible there.

"Stunning isn't emphatic enough!" Jim

murmured. "You're nothing else but *mad-denying!*"

"I didn't know you liked blondes," she whispered.

At that instant a loud snore split the atmosphere.

Jim glanced apprehensively at the couch.

"Never mind Nat!" she said. "He's gone bye-bye!"

"I'm partial to *real* blondes!" he said. "There's nothing more gorgeous in the world than a real blonde!"

"It's such a pretty compliment!" she whispered. "I think you deserve a kiss!"

As she leaned toward him, the perfumed warmth of her surrounded him like a fleecy cloud . . . Gently he kissed her lips . . . But Ann's mouth became a living flame!

ETHEL HYATT smiled as she watched her grumbling husband drive away on his mission to retrieve her mislaid cigarette case. She knew the trip to the Hinsdale's would take the better part of an hour.

There was a very definite reason for her insistence that he drive back for the case . . . She didn't need it . . . She could have gotten it herself the next day, because Ann was one of her most intimate friends and they saw each other almost daily.

But a certain young man named Leonard Reeves had been her bridge partner that evening, and he had helped her win a coveted prize. Later, after a rapid succession of highballs, she had thanked him.

"It's a pleasure to be your partner," he had answered.

"How sweet of you!" she cooed.

"But I'd like to win a prize, too!" he added.

"Can I help?" she lisped.

"You're the prize I want!" he shot in reply.

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DIAMOND CUT DIAMOND!

By
Ray Cranston

T O-NIGHT'S BILL of fare in the dining car didn't click at all, insofar as Franklin Bates was concerned, and with a face as long as the Washington Monument, he strode through the intervening coaches to his compartment. His lack of gastronomical satiety rendered him moody, misanthropic.

The moment his fingers rested upon the knob, however, a strange thrill coursed through his entire being. Someone had entered his compartment during his absence; and, if he could depend at all upon the evidence of his senses, that someone was still there. A mighty fortunate affair it had been for him that the supper proved to be a flop!

Exercising caution no end, he pushed open the door and pressed upon the switch set in the panelling. A blinding flash of light—a little frightened squeal—the sound of a few small objects tumbling to the floor—

"A visitor, by all that's unholy!" His composure wavered not a bit, even when his startled eyes took in the totally unexpected figure of his captive.

And quite an amazing catch he had made, at that. In the approximate center of the room, stood a woman, pale and wide-eyed, but lovely despite the evident drawback of approaching hysteria.

In the manner of all orthodox gentlemen, Franklin Bates admitted a slight leaning toward the peroxide of the species. If so, his every ambition should have been adequately fulfilled, here and now. His right lady of the wrong compartment possessed every charm familiar to the light headed gentry, to say nothing of numerous and sundry others which dam few ever aspired to acquire. Her

hair was golden, of that peculiar shade and softness which makes a man's fingers twitch with anticipation; her eyes were of the sheerest come-hither blue, topping a small, tilted nose and tiny, kiss-me-for-the-love-of-Mike lips. Her figure! How splendidly that close-fitting travelling suit suggested dimples where dimples should be, and curves in lavish generosity!

Franklin Bates turned the key in the lock.

"So you've developed rock-pile inclinations, haven't you?" He tried to sneer effectively, but the lines about his eyes gave away the secret of his smile.

"No; I—" Her voice rose, fluttered, fell. The lie simply wouldn't come.

Bates shook his head. "You'd better reserve your alibis for the judge," he said, moving to his opened travelling bag, whose rummaged contents denoted plainly the touch of a vandal. "I had believed that my secret was safe, but it appears that a man can't buy a diamond worth two hundred grand without at least a score of your breed trailing him to the bitter end."

"A diamond?" Her eyes widened theatrically.

"As if you didn't know!" He withdrew a black velvet box from a fastened pocket in the side of the case, and snapped it open for her inspection. "Gone. I suspected as much," he said softly, without changing his expression. "You've found it."

"How dare you!" Her voice rasped in his ear.

Franklin Bates stroked his chin thoughtfully. "If you were a man, this would mean stars and bars for you, but as you're only a disgustingly simple woman, I sup-

pose I'll have to forego the pleasure of the former, and see that you get a double penalty of the latter."

Two big crocodile tears welled into her eyes, and did a Niagara down her cheeks. "To think that you would accuse me of—of stealing!"

"Nothing of the sort," he growled, with vicious sarcasm. "I'll merely summon the conductor and let the cops at the first station on the line form their own conclusions."

"Please!" Her soft white hand found its way to his arm. "I couldn't bear the humiliation, and I'll swear I didn't take it!"

Bates thought hard. To accuse this damnably appealing young woman of a crime she perhaps hadn't committed would be nothing short of despicable; still, he couldn't afford to let her walk out of the compartment without any manner of fuss if she *had* annexed his two hundred thousand dollar bauble!

"Tell you what I'll do," he said at length. "If you'll submit to a thorough search, and the diamond doesn't come to light, I'll offer my sincerest apologies and regrets."

Her cheeks reddened in maidenly horror. "Search me? Never!"

"Very well." He turned to the door.

"Wait!" Her frantic appeal called him back. "I'll go through with it—anything—!"

Bates seated himself upon a chair. "Go to it," he said brutally. "Peel."

The girl hesitated for a moment, then, apparently realizing that the cards were stacked against her, with bright new handcuffs in the offing, shut her eyes tightly and fumbled at the fastenings of her coat.

"You needn't do an ostrich," remarked the man, with unnecessary bluntness. "I'm not interested in your physique. Just convince me that you haven't my lump of carbon, and you can slap on your

duds and beat it. I'm sorry this mutual humiliation is essential, but I haven't any other alternative."

Lord! What a liar he was! Even though he'd have hated to admit it even to himself, Franklin Bates was more interested in his unfolding future than in the discovery of his missing gem. And, by the time the suspected one had pitched over her short coat and skirt for his inspection, he felt even more positive of that feature of the case.

In her darn near transparent step-ins



His eyes roved over her decisively nude body.

'Forget it, little precious," he said.



and loose silken brassiere, she was the devil of a lot prettier than he had dared to hope she would be. Skin as white as that he had never seen before in his sophisticated existence; breasts so firm and pink-tipped he had dreamed of and never grasped; and flaming cheeks which threw into sharp contrast the rest of that glorious expanse of lovable flesh.

Without lifting her eyes, she kicked off her tiny satin slippers and lifted a perfectly moulded leg to remove a stocking—

Mr. Franklin Bates forgot that he had ever owned a diamond.

"I suppose that I have assured you of my innocence?" she whispered, rather haughtily.

"Not quite." Her captor wasn't satisfied, by any means. "You've got to come absolutely clean, sister."

The girl chewed nervously at her under-lip. "It isn't fair," she protested miserably, her voice breaking

"Nor is it above-board to slip into my compartment and rummage into my effects. Complete the operation, and make it snappy."

"Snappy" would be a rather shabby manner of describing her motion in shedding the last leaf. "Zippy" or "Spiffy" might be slightly more appropriate. In one second flat, the flimsy brassiere and step-ins flew through the air, and curled themselves ungracefully about the neck of the unsuspecting Mr. Bates.

"That's better." His eyes roved over her decisively nude body in the manner of an ecstatic coon viewing a cut melon. "Now, as a grand finale, a good look into your mouth, and the deed is done."

The girl submitted willingly, if an grily. She had about reached the limit of her endurance, and desired nothing more than to escape the clutches of this third-degree administering, handsome maniac.

Bates scrutinized the pearly molars conscientiously; made her wag her tongue, and lift it. No sign of a diamond in that yawning pit.

But her lips! As she snapped closed her delicate jaws, those blood-red kiss-trappers remained within six inches of his eyes. The atavistic urges which civilization had repressed in him leapt to the surface. Even the hair on his chest stood up on end. He saw red—more red—a downpour of it which obscured his vision—

She was in his arms, struggling desperately, while his lips sought hers, hungrily, greedily. A kiss that played havoc with his senses, and knocked a few solid bricks out of her own foundation; another; yet another.

Regardless of the consequences, or even of life itself, he swung her up into his arms and rained kisses upon her cheeks, the little hollow of her neck, her shoulders, while his hands stroked her back with maddening appeal.

"I love you, little temptress!" He was scarcely conscious that he spoke. His blood coursed through his veins at a greater rate of speed than he had believed possible, and his breath came now in quick, short gasps.

"Love me, then!" She smiled enticingly, lifting her lips unreservedly to his, and when she spoke, she expressed her whole feeling . . .

AT LAST, like all mad, magnificent moments, it ended. Franklin Bates relaxed upon his pillow, a terrible feeling of guilt gnawing at the pit of his stomach. What, in the name of Virtue Triumphant, had he done?

He opened his lips to offer a frantic apology. He must explain, beg of her to forgive him—

A small, hard round object rolled beneath his leg, attracted his immediate attention. His groping fingers encountered it, closed over it, and he lifted it to his eyes.

The missing diamond!

The girl sat bolt upright, and buried her face upon his chest. "I'm sorry," she managed to confess, between genuine sobs. "I—I had it all the time!"

Bates nodded his head; and like a true gentleman, pursued the matter no further. Let her keep her secret. What in the devil did it matter where she had cached the stone?

"Forget it, little precious," he said, stroking that silky golden hair which had wound itself around his heart. "The darn thing has exercised reproductive powers; I've found two diamonds! How would you like to wear this one, and take a never-to-be-forgotten little trip with me, to Nice, the Riviera—?"

The bright yellow locks nodded vigorous approval.







The Bridal Dance

By

Frank Kenneth Young

CYRUS BROADWAY was a bachelor. He had been one for forty years. Possessed of brilliant mentality, and wonderful business sagacity, he had managed, during the greater part of his life, to amass a tidy fortune. But because of an inherited diffidence where women were concerned, he had never married. In his more youthful years, he had been too awkward and bashful to get very far with women; now that worldly contacts had given him greater polish, he still avoided the ladies, but for a different reason. He believed them all gold-diggers.

Incessant attention to business, and a long life of unnatural repression, had left their marks on him, physically, however. Now that he was forty, he was awakening to the disturbing fact that his health was not all it should be. He was nervous, irritable, troubled with insomnia. He feared he was about to have a nervous breakdown. Finally driven by necessity, he sought the advice of a physician whom he had known since the days when both were in college.

"Why, there's nothing the matter with you, Cyrus," the physician announced, after looking him over. "True, you've been working hard and putting in long hours. Perhaps, too, you have remained too much indoors for your own good. But you have no disease; you are suffering from no specific malady."

"But this infernal restlessness!" complained Cy. "I don't sleep well! Sometimes I feel as if—oh, I don't know how I feel! But I am dissatisfied with everything. Nothing seems to please me or give me pleasure. Do you think I ought to travel, dash off to some heathen resort, or—?"

The doctor smiled in frank, friendly manner. "You have never married, have you, Cyrus?" he asked.

The wretched man shook his head. "No!" he asserted positively. "Don't care for women! Don't know a damned thing about 'em!"

"There lies your trouble," said the physician softly. "You just think you don't care for 'em, Cyrus. As a matter of fact, your nervous system is burdened with the repressions of years. You've lived alone a long time, Cy! Nature, you know, must be recognized!"

"Oh, you surely don't think that—?"

"I surely do! It's not good for man to be alone, Cyrus! My advice to you would be to take a little fling at life, go back a few years and re-live your reckless youth!"

"I don't know any women," objected Cyrus miserably. "The society dames I meet don't appeal to me, and I am not acquainted with any others."

"You don't need to be, Cyrus!" said the physician. "I'm not urging you to marry. I'm merely advising you to become broadminded for your health's sake. In these times of depression, women can be bought very cheaply!"

"Oh!—like that?"

The doctor smiled as he nodded. "You'll become a new man, Cyrus. As for the ethics of it, pay her a sufficient sum, and forget her! . . . Some women are like that! . . ."

"I—I see," murmured Cyrus slowly . . .

For days after the interview, Cyrus mused and meditated. He didn't like the idea at all. He had always lived a life of continence; he had entertained lofty ideals; his morals had been of the best.

He disliked the thought of altering his ways even for his health's sake. And yet, he knew that something should be done. The question was—what? He knew no women of easy virtue; he never had known any. Where was he to find, and how was he to make the acquaintance of, this health-giving creature?

Should he state the circumstances frankly, and trust her powers of understanding? No! Somehow, he didn't approve of that.

To have her know it was a matter of necessity would place him in an awkward position. He had rather she believed him a man of impulses, who found it difficult to resist temptation. Women, he had heard, loved to believe that they exerted strong influence, that their charms were irresistible. He would approach the matter gradually, by experimentation, he decided.

Therefore, arriving next day at the of-

*Two warm, bare arms
encircled his neck like
clinging vines.*



fice, he cornered one of his business associates and put a rather confidential question.

"Masters," he said, "as one man to another, how would a chap go about making the acquaintance of a woman? Er—not an ordinary woman, you understand; but one who might be approached say, in matters of intimacy, on a commercial basis?"

Mr. Masters stared; his jaw sagged; his nose glasses dropped on the desk before him. "Upon my soul!" he gasped. "Cy, what's come over you all of a sudden?"

Mr. Broadway flushed. "I—er—have never had very much experience in this line," he confessed. "But it just occurred to me to wonder how one managed. I don't mean to cast reflections upon your character, for we have always been good friends, and I admire you immensely. I don't mean to insinuate, you understand, but—well, it is rumored that you live a life of—er—relaxation after business hours. Can't you advise me?"

Masters threw back his head and roared. The idea of Cy Broadway, the big stocks and bonds man who thought only in terms of dollars and cents, suddenly manifesting a flair for the life that is gay! The very idea of such a man emerging from his shell and realizing the world contained such desirable creatures as women!

"Cy," he gasped, "I wouldn't have dreamed it possible! But, after all, you've come to the right party. I wouldn't give you a bum steer. My tips are always the goods! Go to 1453 Lockwood Avenue, and ask for Annette!"

"Aw—a house!" Cy made a gesture of disgust. "No doubt everything would be as you say, but. . . Supposing I wish to entertain a lady at my apartment—or be entertained by one?"

"Easy!" answered the sophisticated Mr. Masters. "You want to connect with some good 'call' house. Here's a phone number"—scribbling on a bit of paper. "Ask for Madame Courdray, and tell her just

what you want. Give her your business rating with Bradstreet and Dunn, if she asks for security."

"Thanks a lot, Mac!" said Cyrus gratefully. "Er—you'll regard our conversation as being confidential, won't you?"

"Awwwwww!" growled Masters, "forget it! . . ."

THAT EVENING, after a sumptuous dinner, Cyrus attired himself with meticulous care, and called the number given him.

"Madame Courdray?" he inquired. "I am Cyrus Broadway. I am rather prominent in the business world—you may have heard of me. I am informed that you—er—sometimes supply companions for—er—parties and the like. I have nothing to do this evening, and am bored. Could you—er—would you? . . ." He paused, blushed and perspired. . . "Why, no, she won't have to go out . . . Merely entertain me in my apartment. . . You will? . . . Thank you very much! I shall be expecting her! . . ."

He hung up the receiver, and wiped a moist brow. His hands were trembling. But he had taken the initial step. A lady for the evening had been promised him. Who she might be, or what she might look like, he had no idea; but, when one gambled, one had to take chances! . . .

He walked the floor for several minutes, drank two straight whiskeys and smoked four cigarettes.

After what seemed eternity, the doorbell rang. Cy motioned his man servant to answer the summons.

"A lady to see you, sir," he announced upon returning.

"Show her in!" murmured Cy weakly.

The man withdrew. There was a brief wait. Then the door opened, and a young woman entered the room, peering curiously about her. Cyrus rose and moved to greet her.

"Good evening!" he said.

"Oh, hello!" . . . She was charming frankness personified. She met his gaze

and smiled in dazzling, breath-taking manner. "So you're the guy, huh?"

Cyrus bowed as he swiftly appraised her . . . Perhaps twenty years of age, of medium height and medium weight, an unnatural blonde, wearing garments of the latest mode yet too flashy to become her well, lips and cheeks heavily rouged, eyes bold and daring. . . Inwardly, Cy quailed.

"I am Cyrus Broadway," he informed her. "Perhaps your employer—er—Madame Courdray, has told you of my desires."

"Oh, yeh, Mamie gave me the dope!" she replied cheerfully. "You just want a sofa-pal, huh?—nothin' special?"

"Oh, no, nothing special!" he hastened to assure her. "May I take your wrap?"

"Sure! . . . By the way, I shall be 'Goldie' to you!"

She turned before him as the wrap was removed, flashing another seductive smile over one bare shoulder. Her evening gown, Cyrus observed, was a silver-spangled affair, cut alarmingly décolleté.

"Say!" she remarked inelegantly, "this



In a trice she had stepped out of her dress, leaving only black lace panties and brassiere.

sure is a swell dump you've got here! Did you buy it all yourself?"

"Ahem!" he evaded. "Won't you be seated?" And he led the way to a chaise longue.

Languidly, she seated herself beside him, leaned heavily upon his shoulder, and crossed one knee upon the other.

"Well," she inquired matter-of-factly, "what's your idea of a hot evening?"

"Why," stammered Cyrus, "really, I'm not sure. I had some slight idea of making your acquaintance and—" A heavy scent of exotic perfume struck him full in the face, and again he quailed. "Er—do you play Bridge?"

"B-Bridge?" she gasped, round-eyed and amazed. "Did you say Bridge?"

"Yes," replied Cyrus uncomfortably.

"Well, fer cryin' out loud!" she squealed, shaking with laughter. "Gee, you're a slow guy! You don't get me! I mean do you wanna dance, or would you rather just make love and pet?"

Cy positively squirmed. "I might offer you a drink," he suggested hopefully.

"Okay, Big Boy! That's more like it! Get hot!"

"I'm afraid we aren't well enough acquainted to—er—" stammered Cyrus.

"Well, say! Do we gotta be acquainted, first?" she demanded. "I told you my name's Goldie! Go ahead—strut your stuff! I can take it! That's what I'm bein' paid for, ain't it?"

Mr. Broadway threw up his hands, figuratively speaking. For abruptly it dawned on him that the girl was impossible. She exercised no finesse whatever. She undoubtedly possessed her points, but they, such as they were, were beyond his comprehension. He couldn't feel attracted to her. He felt he should first find something in common with her, from a mental standpoint. She was obviously too shallow, too—well, crude. He couldn't discover her intellectual plane, for the reason that she had none!

"Are you married, Big Boy?" she asked.

after gulping the drink Cy's man servant brought.

"No."

"Well, how'd you like me for your little cuddley-uddlums, huh?" And she flashed a smile that would have driven a goof to the booby-hatch.

Positively, that was the last straw! The thought of having such a girl for a wife caused Mr. Broadway to shudder in every nerve!

"I'm afraid," he announced abruptly, "that I am not in the mood for pleasures tonight. You had better go! However"—as he caught the expression on her face—"you shall receive payment in full, regardless."

"Ohhh!" she squealed, "without having to do anything?"

"Yes!"

"Well, I must say, you're a swell guy! At least, you'll let me kiss you for that, won't you?"

Mr. Broadway hesitated, and was lost.

Two warm, bare arms encircled his neck and fastened themselves like clinging vines. Two soft, warm breasts pressed passionately against his chest. And two hot lips, heavily coated with rouge, clamped moistly over his mouth. The effect was suffocating. Cy almost struggled to escape.

"Er—thanks!" he spluttered, when she had reluctantly released him. . . "Let me help you with your wrap. . ."

"S'long, Big Boy! Warmer feelings next time! . . ." And with another of her devastating smiles, she was gone.

Mr. Broadway took a turn or two, vigorously scrubbing his lips with a white, linen handkerchief. It was the first time a woman had ever kissed him, and he swore wholeheartedly it would be the last. He retired early and was more restless than he had been for weeks. . . .

YET THE following evening found him again at the phone, calling Madame Courdray. If the type of woman who was sent

out for social purposes had no mentality that would appeal to a man, he would try a different tack.

"Send me," he murmured into the phone, "someone with whom I will not be obliged to visit—someone who will not talk or expect to be entertained, but who

will stir my imagination, appeal to my aesthetic sense. . . . A model, you say, One who poses? . . . Well, perhaps—yes . . . Very well—I'll be expecting her. . . . Thank you!" . . .

He was walking the floor with nervous impatience, when the caller arrived and was ushered into the room.

He glanced up to see a dark-haired, exotic creature, very tall, almost as tall as Cyrus himself, yet curvingly slender. Her figure was wrapped in a long, clinging cloak that revealed rounding curves to good advantage. Her black hair was brushed smoothly back in a chic bobbed effect, and her skin was as pale as moonlight. She appeared, even at first glance, to be of foreign descent.

"You sent for me, Monsieur?" she intoned in thrilling accents. I am the model. You will call me 'Charmaine!'"

*"Monsieur
desires
yet more
revelment,
perhaps?"*



"Mam'selle!" he murmured, taking her slender, white hand, and gazing soulfully into her dark, languorous eyes. "I am honored!"

"You weesh to see beau-ee?" she smiled. "You wish to be thrill' by sight of the feminine? You weesh me to pose for you, Monsieur, in the—oh, so intimate manner?"

"Er—well, we'll see," stammered Cyrus. "You see, Mam'selle, I am wholly unaccustomed to ladies. I hardly know what I want. But I am both eager and anxious to become better acquainted with your sex."

"Ah, yes!" She smiled knowingly. "You weel weesh to approach gradually an' by degrees! Monsieur, I understand!"

He took her cloak and she stepped out before him attired in a long, dark gown that clung seductively to her rapering limbs and curving hips and adhered to her rounding seat as if affixed with adhesive. It was cut to a sharp V in front, so that her firm, outstanding breasts were scarcely covered. The gown had no back at all; the straps went about the neck rather than down over the shoulders.

"Tell me," she murmured, "how weel you weesh me to pose for you, Monsieur?"

"Well, perhaps I'd better leave the details to you," he replied. "From your experience, you will have learned what most appeals to men."

"Ah, but yes!" she chuckled. "Do be seated, Monsieur. I shall do my best to intrigue you!"

Cyrus sank weakly into a chair, and watched.

The lady poised, glancing back over her shoulder. Then she swung into a slow, measured step that took her the length of the room and back. The gown clung entrancingly to her legs, revealing their long, slender lines, and displaying the movements of her hips and thighs as she walked. Her bare back and bosom gleamed with soft luster in the brilliant light.

"I am now the mannequin, Monsieur."

she announced. "The fashionable mod-ell in the style shoppe, displaying an exquisite creation which Monsieur desires to purchase for a loved one. Is it not beautiful, Monsieur, and do I not wear it with superb grace?" She paused a moment before his chair, swaying her hips alluringly as she turned for his inspection.

He had to admit to himself that she was a vast improvement over the "Goldie" of previous acquaintance, and yet. . .

"Eet ees too ordinaire," she decided, after glimpsing the expression of his face. "Monsieur desires to be still more thrilled, n'est ce pas? . . . Vairree well!"

Slender fingers moved swiftly to the fastenings of the gown, and stripped it down over swaying hips. In a trice she had stepped out of it, attired only in black lace panties and brassiere.

"Now I am the lingerie mod-ell," she smiled, strutting affectedly before him, and pirouetting as she turned.

The light shone brightly upon the pale, gleaming flesh of her waist and thighs, almost penetrating the thin material of the scanty garments. It revealed the striking contrast of black upon white, and caused the woman to appear very lovely indeed. Yet, to Cyrus, her act had all the appearance of an ordinary style and fashion show, such as he had seen many times before. Although amused and pleased, he did not feel mightily thrilled.

The model, who appeared to be judging his emotional reactions by the expression of his face, abruptly decided upon a more daring move.

"Monsieur desires yet more revelation, perhaps," she murmured. And swift fingers removed the brassiere and cast it from her. Again she promenaded, with both firm, white breasts fully exposed.

Although Cyrus had glimpsed as much feminine nudity at certain theatrical performances, he had never before glimpsed it at such close range, or in the privacy of his own apartment. Yet he was almost

(Please turn to Page 56)





ART---AND MARIETTE!

By

Ronald Clement

(Concluded)

SYNOPSIS OF PART ONE: Mariette, a model of the romantic Viennese Carre, declares a holiday. She hies herself to the New Orleans race track, where she forms the unconventional acquaintance of Larry Noble, a writer of vaudeville skits. A warm friendship develops, and in the late afternoon, she invites him to her studio. Once there, Larry professes love for her. Mariette, secretly loving him, demands proof. He draws her into his arms and kisses her. She strives weakly to escape from his impassioned embrace.

"AS IF ANYTHING but love matters!" he gave back, clinging to her in a wild fervor of emotion.

A strange sense of lightness entered Mariette's soul, and she smiled into his eyes. His mouth was warm against hers, and he kissed her with a frenzy which bore mute evidence of hungered, starved love.

Her eyes flamed. "Larry," she confessed frankly, "I have never loved another, and I will never love another—but how I *do* love you! I've got to tell you! I love you! I love you—love you—love you!"

Larry smiled confidently, and drew her to him until their lips melted together in a caress of wildest abandon. Her hands clutched him desperately, and she returned each throbbing kiss, hotly and heedlessly.

"Little treasure!" His breath came in shortened gasps, as desire pounded in his brain and fired him to the very marrow of his bones.

With one hand, he clasped her savagely to him, until the realization came over him that the dreadful pressure hurt her. "My poor darling!" His embrace became infinitely more gentle, and he kissed her softly upon the passion-redened lips, while his fondling fingers

played over the clustering ringlets which shone like polished ebony.

"Kiss me!" she murmured, spent with ecstasy, her eyes closing softly, and her lips seeking his. . . .

IT WAS LATE evening when they left the studio. Larry's step was lighter than it had been in months, and his thoughts soared far above the commonplace.

"Shall we look up a parson now?" he asked eagerly. "I want you to belong to me legally and spiritually as well—oh, darling!"

"Not yet," Mariette cut in, with a shy blush. "Let's go places first."

"You're the boss, temporarily, at least. Where to?"

"I don't know."

Larry looked hurt. "This is your town, beloved, and your party. Let's ankle to the closest restaurant first, and while we gorge on Creole cooking, you may receive some priceless inspiration."

Arm in arm, they sauntered along the broad thoroughfare in a slowly gathering twilight. Larry chatted gaily, and Mariette listened. The more she listened, the more she loved the strange Yankee individual who had so completely enthralled her with the sway of his magic tongue; and the more she loved him—

"Here's where we eat," Larry pointed out an unostentatious restaurant a few feet across the way. "Suggestions from you are rare so we'd better advantage ourselves of circumstances and obey that impulse."

Mariette nodded absently. The place was no criterion of exclusiveness, but she would like to sit across a table from him for a while, and allow memory to bring

back in detail the events of the wonderful afternoon.

The meal was a pronounced success; the quality of the food and the quantity of his appetite served to silence even Larry's babbling tongue. For that bless-

ing, Mariette of the Quarter was grateful.

"Do you know that you haven't told me you loved me in ten minutes?" Coffee and youth were served simultaneously, and Larry's voice cut sharply through her reverie.

"Haven't I?" She nodded absently. "You know I'm wild about you, don't you, sweetheart?"

He grinned expansively. "'Sweetheart!' A rose by any other name would be a vermifuge flower!" he replied in his habitual banter. "To me, the very sound of your voice is eloquent!"

"As if anything but love matters!" he gave back, clinging to her in a fervor of emotion.

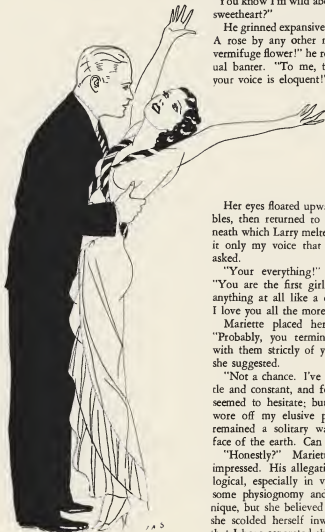
Her eyes floated upward like soap bubbles, then returned to a fixed stare, beneath which Larry melted completely. "Is it only my voice that thrills you?" she asked.

"Your everything!" he said, enrapt. "You are the first girl to ever give me anything at all like a decent break, and I love you all the more for it!"

Mariette placed her hand over his. "Probably, you terminated your affairs with them strictly of your own accord," she suggested.

"Not a chance. I've been patient, gentle and constant, and for a moment they seemed to hesitate; but the veneer soon wore off my elusive personality, and I remained a solitary wanderer upon the face of the earth. Can I help that?"

"Honestly?" Mariette was genuinely impressed. His allegations were scarcely logical, especially in view of his handsome physiognomy and marvelous technique, but she believed him. "*Tant pis!*" she scolded herself inwardly. "To think that I have separated the wheat from the



gaff for ten successful years, only to fall prey to the transparent lies of a Putnam-Dyed deceiver!"

Larry turned his hand quickly, and seized upon hers. "Let's forget my jaded complexes," he suggested, "and talk about something interesting. Do you honestly love me?"

Mariette smiled her indulgence. "Must I repeat it again?" she replied lightly, with mockery in her voice.

Larry nodded his head. "A thousand times a day, sweetheart—but what matters it, after all? You'll tolerate my miserable company for a few weeks, then relentlessly break my heart to add your own personal '*E Pluribus Unum*' scar in the very center."

As he finished, he lifted himself slowly from the chair and assisted her to her feet. "It's still your party," he reminded, as they returned again to the fading twilight of the avenue. "Whither shall we whence? I'm not even going to suggest a possible course of action. It's a bit early to take in a theatre or whoopee den, and I'll confess that my spontaneous ideas are disappointing."

"Let's just walk." Mariette spoke very quietly, with averted eyes. "There's so much to see, to hear, to talk about! Life within doors is not an especially pleasant affair to one who is forever cooped up in a silent studio. My holiday is not ended—"

"Your holiday has just begun!" cut in Larry, impulsively. "By the time we reach the parson's——!" His voice trailed off into suggestive silence.

They had rounded the corner, and were approaching the tiny sub-entrance of that retreat for lovers, the Municipal Park. Mariette dropped her hand from his arm, and entwining her fingers about his trembling ones, led him, mutely unprotesting, to a secluded bench just behind a drooping palm.

"Now," she said, slumping to a seat

dangerously close to him, "you may love me again to your heart's content!"

The eagerness in her eyes should have convinced Larry that she was entirely sincere; for the moment, however, he remained deaf, dumb, blind and cuckoo, as immobile and impassive as the huge statue of General Beauregard which towered above them.

"What's the matter?" Mariette fidgeted nervously, after an interminable length of time and silence.

Her evident concern restored Larry to normalcy, and regaining his voice, he fired an opening volley. "What's the matter? Plenty! I'm worried about something; worried stiff that you may back out at the last minute!"

Mariette leaned even closer. "I—I couldn't live without you!" she murmured, averting her gaze.

"Thank the Lord for that!" With a sudden rush of courage, Larry flung his arms about her, and drew her to him in an embrace which she decided mentally had fractured three ribs. "Baby, you've made me the happiest damn fool in the world!"

"I'll go you one better." Mariette lifted her lips to his. "You've made me even happier!"

He kissed her. Kissed her again. Mariette was no amateur in the royal art of osculation, but in all her experience, she had never been so thoroughly kissed. And he kissed her exactly two hundred and nine times more.

"Name the hour, glorious!" He beamed on her. "As soon as you pass the word, we'll look up one of your local Lohengrin experts, and enter into a lifetime contract!" He paused for a moment, and an expression of actual fear darted across his features. "Bite my lip, honey!" he begged plaintively. "I've got to make sure I'm not dreaming!"

Mariette complied with the eccentric request. "You're a strange creature, Larry, boy," she said, with a glad laugh.



"I . . . I couldn't live without you!"
she murmured, averting her gaze.

"Because I'm madly in love!" he assured her. "Give us another of those kisses, sweetheart!"

The sound of hurried footsteps along the winding gravel pathway, and the sudden appearance before them of a short, formally clad individual with huge shell-rim frames and well trimmed Van Dyke wrought havoc with Larry's thousand and first kiss, and he thrust out his jaw pugnaciously.

"What's this——?" he started, but a voluble flow of enthusiastic comment from the lips of the newcomer silenced him.

"*Ma chérie!*" Mr. Van Dyke laid a possessive hand upon the shoulder of the girl. "What a remarkably fortunate coincidence! All day I have searched for you, infesting all studios and your habitual haunts! To think that I have found you now—in time——!"

"In time to effect a hasty retreat!" Larry leapt to his feet and thrust aside the hand of the newcomer. "This young lady and I are henceforth *incommunicado*, as far as you are concerned. Take the hint, and the air!"

The other regarded him with rising fury. "I do not choose to be subjected to any more of your unthoughtful insults," he fumed irately. "Come, Mariette, I assure you that the matter is urgent——"

Larry's closed fist hovered threateningly close to the nose of the dignified one. "Listen, Pisa," he retorted, "enough is too much. Make yourself scarce, or I'll hand you a Dempsey sleep-inducer!"

"My name is not Pisa, and——"

"Pisa or not, you're way off balance!" Larry saw red, white, blue, and numerous other hues. "You're tonsillitis to me, and you've got my neck swelling!"

"But—I insist——" Van Dyke strove desperately to convey his explanation, but words failed him.

"You insist, do you?" Larry's rage approached the stage of tears. "Spring-fly, you've got exactly one minute to buzz off, and I'm counting the seconds, like I promised my dear old mother I'd do!"

Mariette rose from the bench, and placed a restraining hand on his arm. "You—you mustn't," she pleaded, almost inaudibly.

Larry wheeled sharply, and glared into her eyes. "Do you love me?" he demanded, a red glow on his brow and throat.

She nodded her head. "Of course."

"Then here goes the winning goal!" He thrust her gently aside, and drew back his fist. "My profound apologies, Mr. Somnambulist. I've given you your chance, but you choose to defy my just wrath. Watch this constellation, and if you see Jupiter twice, you've been gypped by a bum telescope!"

His clenched fist shot forward, and his frightened opponent, suddenly awakening

to a realization that all things were not what they should be, endeavored to avoid the blow, but with a resounding impact, it landed, and the elegant features of the equally elegant Mr. Van Dyke were smeared all over his face.

Larry's lips creased in his customary good-natured smile as he surveyed the

"Hate me?" Larry winced under the lash of her words.

"Yes, I detest you." As she spoke, she wiped the blood from the lips of the groaning victim. "Monsieur Henri Lauilhe, the most famous artist in the world, seeks me for an entire day, then, before you allow him to explain his reasons for wishing me to accompany him, you strike him down!"

Monsieur Lauilhe lifted his head feebly. "It is true, Mademoiselle Mariette," he murmured, almost inaudibly. "I have had



prostrate figure of his victim. "Too much insistence is expensive," he remarked audaciously; then turning to Mariette: "We'd better disappear before 'Spats' summons a copper, and occasions us embarrassment no end. —Say, what in the devil——?"

Mariette had dropped to her knees, and was cradling the head of the vanquished one in her lap. "I hate you!" she cried disdainfully.

a glorious inspiration, and it is only you who may pose for the canvas which shall become my masterpiece. That—that man—he does not understand the artistic temperament——"

"Who doesn't understand what?" Larry loomed threateningly over him. "Brother, you may be the greatest brush-slinger in creation, but you're small-pox to me."

(Please turn to Page 56)







"Watch Out!"

By

Reggie Coghlan

ADELA HUDSON turned the ornate white-gold wrist watch over and over in her hand, and her eyes sparkled with genuine admiration. "It *is* lovely, Esther," she admitted, "but—"

The other woman laughed lightly. "But you still don't approve of my actions," she finished for her, with a shrug of her shoulders.

Adela considered. "It isn't that I don't approve of them," she hastened to explain, the faintest flush of color appearing upon her cheeks; "I simply can't reconcile myself to your strange philosophy. Perhaps after I've been married as long as you have, I may arrive at the realization

that a husband is not sufficient to 'round out one's existence,' as you claim."

"A husband is a decided asset." Esther Davis nodded her head positively. "Heaven knows I'm still fond of placid old Dick; but a bit of romancing while one is yet young, you know."

The eyes of the less sophisticated Adela narrowed. "I'm afraid that I'm hopelessly 'Main Street'," she replied, half to herself. "A good home, and a baby or so, seem to fill out my life, insofar as I'm concerned."

"My dear!" Esther made a movement as if to arise, but checked herself. "Will you never decide to seek pleasures without the walls of your home?"

"I'm not so sure that I will ever care



"A husband is a decided asset."

to search for those delights." Adela gazed wistfully through the window. "Marvin means everything in the world to me; to betray him would be nothing short of treachery."

"You're a fool! Can't you understand that every woman goes through that stage of mad infatuation, emerging finally with a completely altered mental aspect? Sooner or later you'll tire of the same lukewarm caresses, the gradually becoming careless technique, and the final absence of the little attentions which bound you so firmly to your mate. Life's a short, bitter affair at best. Why not profit by the experience of countless women and join the merry whirl before disillusionment comes, as it ultimately will?"

Still Adela Hudson shook her head. "You'd never understand," she said, resuming her well worn smile. "Our temperaments and philosophies are as far apart as the poles, and besides—you've never seen Marvin!"

"No, I've never seen Marvin," repeated the other, with a gesture of hopelessness; "but I've seen countless other husbands, and I've arrived at my own conclusions. You're allowing your momentary infatuation to deprive you of the happiness which the security of a wedding ring permits, and personally, if you will pardon the frankness of a very dear friend, I believe that you lack the courage to face matters squarely."

"I don't want to." Adela spoke in her usual placid fashion, and returned her eyes to the watch which she had held in the palm of her hand throughout the long conversation. "Rather nice workmanship, don't you think?"

Esther accepted the rebuff with the best grace she could command. "It should be," she agreed, showing her teeth in a sardonic smile. "I paid a cool hundred for it at Merson's!"

"A hundred dollars!"

"Certainly. To-morrow is the first an-

niversary of the consummation of our mutual desires. One year of happiness. Unfortunately, Raymond is a travelling man, hence I am deprived of his glorious companionship for the better part of each month, but the two week-ends which we enjoy together are well worth the intervening days of longing and anticipation."

"Your husband is not suspicious?" Almost incredulously.

Esther slumped deeper into the chair, and smiled languidly. "Dick places absolute confidence in me," she said with a knowing look. "As you know, he is called away on rather extensive business ventures from time to time, and my old distaste of travel has always occasioned my remaining at home. I might add, however," she continued with a deep significance, "that even if he remained in the city, I would find occasion to join Raymond—as usual."

Adela grasped the portent of her words. "It is not the lack of opportunity which prevents my venturing beyond the barriers of convention," she said bluntly. "Marvin is obliged to make his periodic trips to Chicago, and if I so chose, I could certainly advantage myself of his absence." As she spoke, she tendered the watch to the other. "I—I hope he likes it," she finished, rather lamely.

"Oh, he will, and no mistake!" Esther regarded the prospective gift proudly. "He'll probably rave over it, coming from the woman he loves! Look at the back, dear; I've had his initials carved by the foremost engraver in the city. I only wish that I would not have lacked the courage to have my own placed beneath!"

The eyes of the other rested for a moment on the delicate carving, and the letters: "R.E.W." impressed themselves indelibly upon her consciousness. The glaring proof of the infidelity of woman, she reflected bitterly.

The position of the dials drew a gasp

of amazement from Escher Davis. "Infernal misery!" she exclaimed. "Five-twelve! Surely, it can't be that late—?"

Adela extended a finger to the electric clock on the mantel. "I'm afraid it is," she said quickly, and her tone was hopeful.

"I'll have to run along, then," Esther

rose swiftly from her chair. "My train for Long Island leaves at seven-thirty, and I've a world of things to attend to before I leave."

"You're week-ending—?"

"How clever you are!" Faintly sarcastic. "And, to be entirely truthful, if I fail to arrive at Cross-Corners to-night,

*A single thought of
her husband darted
through her mind.
Poor old Dick!*



a very disappointed Mr. Raymond Waters will be obliged to occupy his delightful Queen Anne couch—alone!"

"I'm sorry." Adela strove to inject sincerity into her tones, but the attempt ended in rank failure. "Marvin is in Chicago, and I had hoped that you might agree to a little motor jaunt in the morning."

"Sorry, dear," Esther responded from the door, and waved a flippant adieu.

The heavy oaken portal slammed into place, and with a sigh of genuine relief, Adela Hudson crossed the room and flung herself indolently upon the great divan near the window. "Thank the good Lord for Raymond Waters and Long Island love-nests!" she cried aloud to the four walls. "Another half hour of her misguided prattle, and I might have perforce suggested another alternative!"

And late that night, as she lay awake, staring into the shadows of her darkened boudoir, she again thanked a beneficent Providence that she had been spared a temperament similar to that of Esther Davis. Simple, happy wedded life, with carefree and trusting Marvin Hudson was about as close to heaven as any mortal could hope to attain during his brief sojourn on this earth. Gay Lotharios and delightful tete-a-tetes were no doubt unending sources of pleasure to certain types of weak, unreasoning females; but she knew, in her heart of hearts, that in their most impassioned moments, they never once realized the supreme bliss which she enjoyed in the arms of the man she loved; pure, legitimate, whole-hearted caresses!

A smile of happiness flitted over her lips, and she slept.

ESTHER DAVIS smiled languidly, and relaxed in the embrace of the man who thrilled her. "You are well pleased with my little token, Raymond?" she asked softly.

He smiled into her eyes. "It's beautiful,"

he said, "but it does not appeal to me because of that, nor because of its intrinsic value. I like it because it comes from you!"

"My darling!" Her heart pounded with joy.

She lifted her head to meet his passionate lips. He smiled and thrusting a gentle, if firm hand, beneath her chin, he lifted it, and placed his lips over hers, hungrily.

"My darling!" she repeated, drawing closer to him, until her firm, rounded breasts flattened against the hard exterior of his bosom.

Slowly, and with infinite gentleness, his hands played over the exposed portions of her body, caressing her lovely white shoulders, the little hollows of her arms, the contour of her graceful neck.

"Our love is so beautiful, Raymond!" The whispered confession drifted from her lips. His powerful, muscular arms fascinated her, and his phenomenal, breath-taking strength aroused every desire in her ardent nature.

A single thought of her husband darted through her mind. Poor old Dick!

He had never been possessed of either the vitality or the desire to love her so fully, so completely. Even consummation with him had not nearly approached the thrills of anticipation which she now enjoyed in the arms of Raymond Waters!

AS PER SCHEDULE, Marvin Hudson arrived home Monday evening on the four-cleven, and with an enthusiastic embrace, he swept his patient little wife into his arms "Been lonesome, honey?" he asked.

Her lips left his for an instant. "Beyond expression!" she admitted frankly. "I've been longing for you from the very first minute you left the house."

"Poor little girl!" Seating himself on the divan, he drew her into his arms. "I wish the damned old firm would find some-

(Please turn to Page 64)

That Kiss In The Dark

By

Barbara Craftt

(Part One)



FOR THE FIRST time in eight weary months of job hunting, Alice Pelton entered her tiny apartment with a light heart. She had been engaged as secretary by Rodney Cooney, the great novelist.

Rodney Cooney was tremendously wealthy. Writing, with him, was more of a hobby than a profession. His books were sophisticated in the most extreme sense of the word, and each of them was said to have been inspired by an actual affair in his own life. He was fascinatingly handsome; a year or so over forty, with graying hair about his temples that somehow added to his charm. Women from all walks of life, from matrons of the highest circles of society to the lowliest shopgirls eagerly desired, with a truly feminine exhibitionism, to throw themselves at his feet and thus become the heroines of his literary works. But Cooney affected to be very aloof and secluded himself with a Japanese servant in a studio on a small island in a crystal lake of the Adirondacks, and most of his time was spent there.

The opportunity to work with him thrilled Alice Pelton from her head to her tiny toes. But Alice planned for far more than to be the heroine of a novel. She was not a prude, but she was prudent. Alice wanted marriage and security.

Her beautiful face wore a joyful smile as she closed the apartment door behind her and started to disrobe for her bath. She had only two hours to bathe and pack and get to the railroad station to meet Cooney. She kicked off her slippers as her hands flew to the fastenings of her dress. In a trice, dress, stockings, slip and lacy panties were tossed aside excitedly and Alice, completely nude, paused for a moment before a long mirror.

She was rather tall, and in spite of her nudity, carried herself with graceful dignity and perfect poise. Her light brown hair was becomingly bobbed and arranged entrancingly about her face. Her eyes, of deepest sapphire blue, were most expressive under their delicate brows. Her nose was straight and very pretty, while her tenderly curving lips pouted slightly above a determined little chin. The texture and coloring of the skin of her face, and, indeed, her entire body, was amazingly beautiful. Her arms rounded gracefully into perfect shoulders and her gorgeous breasts were full and firm and erect, with ruddily glowing nipples that thrust out impudently from generous circles of tempting pink. Her flat stomach and arched back yielded charmingly to the dimpled curves of her rounded hips, and her luscious white thighs tapered alluringly to slender calves. From the top of her lovely head

to the soles of her pretty feet, with a carefully trimmed, polished nail gleaming on each dainty toe, Alice Pelton was excruciatingly beautiful.

For just a moment Alice stood before the mirror, a little smile of satisfaction playing about the corners of her lips. Although the experienced Mr. Cooney might have seen some very beautiful women, she knew that he could never be indifferent to such bodily charms as she herself possessed. She pattered on bare feet into the bathroom, and presently there came the cool sounds of her ablutions. After the luxury of her scented bath, she briskly rubbed herself dry with a soft towel, dusted her glowing body with delicately fragrant powder, and donned a becoming costume of gossamer panties, light silk slip, white satin waist, with a black skirt and jacket of crepe, filmy stockings, sandals through which her toes peeped out at the world. Hastily packing her travelling bag, Alice closed the apartment, and a taxi was soon whisking her to the station.

As she walked toward him across the concourse of the station, Rodney Cooney studied Alice. He noticed her queenly carriage, her tapered ankles, her calm, fresh beauty, and her air of dignity. And as the breeze opened her unbuttoned jacket, he noticed how her prominent breasts quivered under the shiny satin of her blouse, and smiled a little smile and moistened his lips with the tip of his tongue.

Alice quickly settled into the routine of her work. Cooney's studio was roomy and the surrounding scenery was magnificent, with the deep blue of the lake yielding to the wooded shores which slanted back to the mountain slopes, rising tier on tier on all sides.

Cooney was charming toward her, making her feel quite at ease and injecting into their association a suggestion of equal partnership, rather than a sharply drawn line between her as the employee and himself as the employer. Her quarters were

luxurious and the meals prepared by the Japanese servant were masterpieces of the culinary art. Cooney stood on no formalities. He worked only when the mood was upon him, and Alice had all the time she wanted for walks about the island, to browse in the well-stocked library, or to catch up on her beauty sleep. However, she found it a great deal more agreeable to spend her spare time in the company of her employer, at cards or at conversation, though the wily author usually kept her cheeks suffused with blushes by his daring topics. Alice was soon completely enthralled by the glamour of the man. She became used to his casual references to the love affairs of his past, to his nonchalant discussion of the details of feminine charms. He seemed to think it most natural for women to disclose their physical assets to gain the attention of men and spoke frequently of how this or that woman had on one pretext or another, shown herself to him unadorned, with the purpose of earning his favors.

In spite of herself, Alice found that his contempt for feminine modesty was influencing her own attitude. Her more prudent judgment to the contrary, she found herself attaching less and less importance



Alice stood before her mirror

to the modesty of the costumes she wore about the studio. Each day she found herself omitting a garment that had seemed necessary the day before, till she fell into the practise of wearing only a pair of loosely cut lounging pajamas, beautifully styled, of sky blue silk. Even her shoes and stockings went by the boards, and her bare white feet revelled in the deep soft pile of the rich carpets.

Rodney Cooney, of course, made not the slightest protest to Alice's Bohemian

in knickers, white shirt, open at the throat, and gay shoes and socks. As usual, Alice wore nothing but her pajamas.

"Boy oh boy! What a peach of a day!" remarked Cooney for the twelfth time.

"It's a good day to put one to sleep," returned Alice.

"What an indifferent, cold-blooded creature you are, Alice!" exclaimed Cooney. "Why, this is the kind of weather that quickens a man's pulse and makes him glad he is a man."

As she walked toward him, Rodney Cooney studied Alice.



garb. In fact, he pretended not to notice it very particularly. But a few times, when she stood between him and the light which silhouetted her body perfectly through her scanty clothing, the intense gleam in his eyes sent little shivery thrills racing through her veins from head to foot.

ONE SUNNY afternoon when the air was oppressively warm, Cooney had tired of work early. He and Alice were sprawled lazily on the velvety lawn in the sun, watching the white clouds drift slowly across the sky and idly following the progress of Saki, the Jap, as he trundled a whining lawnmower across the sloping expanse before the house. The odor of the freshly cut grass, mingled with that of pine, drifted to their nostrils in a fragrant feast of aromatic perfection. Cooney was garbed

Alice laughed lazily. "Perhaps that's why women prefer to go to sleep in this sort of weather. I, for one, don't feel particularly glad to be a woman when the men are particularly glad to be men."

"Oh well! I'm going to get some good out of it. I believe I'll shock your maidenly modesty by taking a sun bath," declared the writer. With which he slipped off his shirt to reveal a muscular torso, still rather slender, with a tangled mat of wiry black hair that covered his chest.

"That's the first time anyone ever accused me of being modest," protested Alice, as she viewed his muscular torso with admiration.

"Then why don't you do the same thing?" suggested Cooney. "Sunshine is mighty good for people!"

"You mean to suggest that I, a shy



He slipped off his shirt to reveal a muscular torso.

young maiden, should strip to the waist in the presence of a man?" exclaimed Alice in mock horror.

"Why certainly! It's being done in the best nudist circles," laughed Cooney.

"I'd do it in a minute, but you probably wouldn't even give me the satisfaction of looking at me," jibed Alice.

"I'd give you a slight glance," he promised, with an intent look.

Alice's pride in the perfection of her body was challenged. Under Cooney's eyes, she felt so nearly naked that she didn't think a pajama jacket mattered much anyway. She wasn't a prude and she wasn't averse to admiration. Under his probing eyes her breasts thrilled as if from a physical contact. The little tips puckered with anticipation as she wondered whether he would touch them if she

took his dare. Her bosom began to heave and tremble with her rising passion. Careless of the presence of the Japanese, she sprang to her feet with a gay laugh, in the same motion stripping off the pajama jacket and tossing it away, to stand before the writer smiling a little proudly as he gazed enthralled upon her half nude beauty. Just for a moment he drank in the picture she made with her gleaming white shoulders, her tempting lips, her flat little abdomen, and her delicious breasts, gloriously naked and gloriously beautiful. Cooney had never seen breasts so lovely. They were shaped like pears, with sweeping, swelling curves at their bases, that rose to shorter, bolder curves surmounted by her rosy nipples, protruding naughtily from a circle of pink that gleamed in the sun.

(To be continued)

Pin Pricks

The Victorian spinster who continued to refer to legs as limbs asked the maid whether she had given the canary its morning bath.

"Yes," the maid replied. "You may come in now."



Flapper (emerging from a deep osculation): Say, I think we've met before.

Shiek (ditto): Yeah, your face does taste familiar.

"Well, Irene, you now have a baby brother."

"Oh, doctor, I'm so glad. Daddy was getting kind of girlish with just me and mother around."



"YA KNOW, JANE REFUSED TO MARRY TOM BECAUSE HE WAS THE SON OF A WEALTHY MAN."

"IS THAT SO?"

"YEAH. SHE'S GOING TO MARRY HIS DAD."



TICK: WHAT'S YOUR WIFE LIKE?

TOCK: RYE, SCOTCH, BACCARDI—ALMOST ANYTHING.

Cutie: Why didn't you let that acrobat teach you a few tricks?

Beautie: He said he was going to do stunts with me and I don't feel I know him well enough.



"OOOOH! I lost my ring down the grate!"
 "That's all right, lady. You wait right there and I'll run below and look around!"

Read

La Paree Stories **for Real Pleasure**

Continued from Page 43

Mariette gnawed at her lip. "You are a fool," she said viciously.

"Then—you don't—love me?" Larry's heart sank.

Mariette heaved a sigh of ennui. "I could never love a man who does not understand art," she said. "Will you kindly take yourself off, before I summon an officer?"

Larry looked at her; removed his gaze for an instant, then looked again. The light in her eyes did not flicker. She had forgotten the thrills of the evening, forgotten her promise, forgotten everything! And he knew that she would never choose to remember!

"Good-night," he mumbled, and turning his back on the odd pair, he moved stiffly off into the gathering shadows.

"Women," he reflected ruefully, "women are—women are——"

But for once, the wisecrack wouldn't come.



Continued from Page 36

indifferent. The woman possessed beauty, no doubt of it; but it was a sort of cold, marble-like beauty that stirred only his admiration. It was almost as if he were gazing upon a chaste, classic statue which had suddenly become invested with life.

"Monsieur is a sly one!" the woman smiled. "He remains silent and unmoved that he may be permitted to see all! Well, *tres bien!*" Again her slender, white fingers flashed and fluttered, and bending forward, she stepped out of the black, lace panties!" . . .

(To be Concluded)

Continued from Page 16

She rose abruptly from her chair, and turned as if to leave.

"Business! Business!" she cried. "It's always business with you! It seems to be your only idea of values!"

"Not at all," he murmured huskily. "I'm crazy about you, Honey! I've been dying to tell you, but you were so taken up with Bernie. I tried to let you see the truth—by picking you for a try-out, getting you a bonus, helping you select your home. . . ."

"Didn't it ever occur to you to try beating Bernie's time?" she inquired.

"It did," he confessed. "But your being married and—"

"But I'll soon be divorced," she put in eagerly. "That, too, must be good business, for it's being done a lot around Hollywood!"

"Well?"

"Do you remember when we first met, and how?" she asked provokingly.

"Oh, DO I?" he exclaimed, his face lighting boyishly.

"Well, must I bump into you again to make you realize you needn't hesitate because of Bernie?"

"You mean—?"

"Just what was it that so attracted your attention that day? My legs, wasn't it?" And with studied deliberation, she stepped back a pace and began raising her dress.

For once in his life hard-working director Blayney upset male tradition. He didn't stare, as one might have expected him to do. He was too eager to leap forward and crush her in his arms. . . .

Continued from Page 10

cupping her breasts in such close unity that there was a deep indentation midway on her bosom.

"Ah-h-h-h-h!" Betty sighed again, lifting her face.

"Just how many is a billion?" she whispered, smiling.

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"Let's count and see!" Jack proposed, plunging his lips into hers with avid thirst!

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"Did you miss me?" she asked, smiling gloriously.

"I surely did!" He kissed her again. "That trip to Chicago was the only thing that saved me!"

"It was a grand voyage!" Betty declared.

"Did you flirt?" he asked, shaking a finger.

"I was sociable!"

This answer seemed to satisfy Tom. . . At any rate, he seemed to prefer kissing to questioning!



Continued from Page 3

the end? Can't a couple have a good time together without always hunting up a preacher?

I like stories detailing action. Don't leave too much to the imagination. How about a few stories about the nickel dance hostesses? Some of the dance halls are sure hot and a description of their lives should be interesting, especially those that only wear their dresses while they are dancing or little trunks and brassieres.

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Continued from Page 22

This swift exchange took place while they were dancing. Len's arm tightened around her waist, and Ethel let her body melt against him tantalizingly.

She knew just how to fit her slim figure into a dancing partner's embrace, so that he would become acutely aware of every soft part of her, and she loved to note the reaction!

"Listen, Len!" she whispered.

The radio orchestra was playing "One Hour with You!" Its strains, and the fact that she was rapidly acquiring a liking for the good looking Len, put satanic ideas into Ethel's brain, and the cock-tails helped to make her doubly responsive to the music.

"Pretty, isn't it?" she breathed in his ear.

"Especially when dancing with you!" he replied.

"I love that music!" she said emotionally. "Hold me tighter, Len!"

Nobody else in the room paid any attention to them, because each was engaged in his or her own particular diversion at the moment.

Very slowly, Ethel moved her hips. Under her satin evening gown there was nothing but a pair of panties, and that proved to be no real hindrance to her technique . . . Len's blood started to race in a fiery stream through his veins.

The more excited he became, the closer she plastered herself against him, and if the music hadn't ceased just then, they would certainly have heard the angels singing in another minute!

Len seized a highball and handed a cocktail to Ethel.

"Anybody on the porch?" he whispered.

"Let's see!" she suggested.

The porch was occupied!

"Is the next dance mine?" he asked.

"They're all yours!" she said, "after that one!"

The music struck up again.

"You're simply marvelous!" he declared, after Ethel had a chance to glue herself in exactly the same position.

"And you're one of the wonders of the world!" she whispered, fitting herself even more glove-like.

"Where did you learn those tricks?" he managed to say.

"Don't ask questions!" she rejoined.

Len was nearly crazy! . . . And Ethel undulated maddeningly.

"How about my prize?" he asked, thickly.

"Isn't it worth having?" she said, moving her hips.

Len moaned. "A long, long kiss is all that's needed now!"

Ethel laughed devilishly. "Is it as good as that?"

"Hm-m-m-m-m-m!" he groaned. "What I'd give for a kiss from those red lips of yours right now!"

Ethel turned face toward him . . . Teasingly, she let her mouth open like a crimson rose, and her tongue traveled moistly around the rim while Len gazed at it.

"You could have it without trying!" she chuckled.

"When?"

"It *might* be arranged!"

"Tonight?"

"Perhaps!"

"Where?"

"I'll tell you later!"

The orchestra stopped its syncopation. Just as the crowd was leaving, Ethel whispered to Len:

"Three-thirty . . . on my porch!"

It was then very close to three a. m.

Ethel's plan had worked better than she had even hoped. Jim had groused a bit about the trip for the cigarette case, which she had very carefully "mis-laid" in the bathroom at the Hinsdale's where it would be found after a little search. But she had kissed him with extra lush-

Boss and Bubbles

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ness and had promised him a thousand more after he returned!

With Jim out of sight, Ethel glanced at the clock.

Hurrying into her bedroom, she tossed off her dress and panties and stockings . . . Then a gigantic powder puff shed its fragrance everywhere!

Ethel was a tall, slim brunette . . . very slim and very brunette!

Impertinent little breasts, tender and round and firm, raised their chocolate-tinted nipples in the midst of inky black circles . . . And they were so easily excited!

Red silk pajamas, which she selected with care, perfectly offset her dark loveliness, and the living room clock was chiming the hour of three-thirty a. m. when she passed through on the way to the comfortable couch hammock on her porch.

Len was concealed behind a small hedge on the lawn when Ethel slipped out on the porch. Truth to tell, he had been a bit doubtful that such a madcap adventure could be so easily arranged at such short notice!

A few steps brought him to her side.

"So you really meant what you said!" he exclaimed.

"I always mean what I say!" she retorted, humming the tune of their most maddening dance together: "One Hour with You!"

"Only an hour?" he chided.

"That's all!" she whispered.

"But an hour with you is worth a lifetime with anybody else!" he exclaimed.

Ethel drew him down on the hammock.

A moment later he moaned: "You're marvelous!"

"And now I'm sure you're one of the world's wonders!" she breathed with a sigh that ended in a gasping, panting cry!

WHEN JIM drove his car back into the garage an hour later, Ethel was sitting

in the hammock, waiting just as she had promised.

She was smoking a cigarette, all alone!

Jim ascended the steps and approached the door, not seeing her in the shadow.

"Sweetheart!" she called. "Here I am!"

"Oh, you're out here!" he replied, in a surprised tone.

"Yes!" she said dreamily. "It's so much more romantic!"

Jim sat beside her.

"Here's your cigarette case!"

"You're a dear!" she gushed. "Did you have a hard time finding it?"

"Very hard!" Jim said. "It was in the bathroom!"

"Was it really?" she exclaimed innocently, adding: "You were gone awfully long."

Jim snorted indignantly. "It took a long time to locate it!"

Ethel said nothing about the remarkably clear odor of perfume that wasn't difficult to recognize! She was going to ask if Ann had helped him locate the cigarette case, but she decided to proffer no queries whatsoever!

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"What of it?" thought Ethel. "Did I have my hour? . . . And what an hour!"

Thoughts of Len thrilled Ethel anew! . . . And recollections of Ann helped not a little!

"I promised you a thousand kisses!" she whispered, pulling Jim back into the shadowy hammock.

"Here's the first!" she said . . . The sentence ended in a muffled, throaty sigh!



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Continued from Page 50

body else to make these regular jumps! It isn't fair to you, honey—"

"Marvin!" she interrupted, sitting up very stiffly in his lap and extending an accusing finger to a white-gold band on his wrist. "Where did you get that?"

"This?" He thought swiftly. "A little present from the Chicago office—"

Unmindful of his explanation, she tore at the fastenings with nervous fingers, and her entire body shook as with palsy.

"Sweetheart!" Every vestige of color left his lips. "What's the matter?"

She had released the catch, and held the graceful timepiece before eyes which wavered hysterically.

"I—I can't look, Marvin!" she stammered, giving way to tears. "If—if—"

He rose to remove the watch from between her fingers. "I don't understand," he spluttered, amazed.

"I've got to know!"

With a fierce gesture, she turned it over in her hand, and stared hard at the once smooth finish of the back of the case. There, although it was apparent that he had endeavored to scrape them away with his pen-knife, remained the bold impressions of three deeply-cut initials: "R.E.W."...



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